

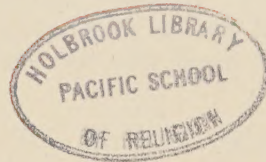
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US Lutherans Approve Merger Plans

(Atlantic City) - The United Lutheran Church in America has given overwhelming approval to plans for a merger with three other Lutheran bodies into a new denomination of over 3,600,000 members. The new body will be the largest church in US Lutheranism.

The 641 delegates convened here for the ULCA's 22nd biennial convention unanimously endorsed a resolution to unite the ULCA with the Augustana Lutheran Church, the American Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church (Suomi Synod).

When results of the vote were announced, the delegates broke into spontaneous applause that lasted for several minutes. Then Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, New York, ULCA president, led the convention in a moving prayer for God's blessing and guidance for the new church.

Specifically, the delegates approved articles of incorporation entitled "Agreement of Consolidation" which included the proposed constitution and by-laws of the new church.

It is expected that the new denomination, to be known as the Lutheran Church of America, will be established at a constituting convention in June, 1962, and that it will begin to function officially by the following January 1. The ULCA

was the last of the uniting church bodies to express initial approval of merger plans. Similar action had been taken earlier this year by the other three churches involved.

In other actions the ULCA convention:

Adopted a 10,000 word statement on Holy Communion after rescinding a 250-word pronouncement on the same subject that had been in force for 20 years. The new statement, prepared by a 15-member commission which has been at work for three years, has been defined as "an attempt to relate evangelical theology to evangelical practice".

One section dealing with inter-communion states: "The time is ripe for Lutherans to initiate theological discussion with other Christian bodies regarding inter-communion." At present Lutherans do not have such agreements with other denominations.

Approved a record budget of \$30,985,700 for the 1962-63 biennium. Largest item in the 1962 budget of \$15,194,700 is an item of \$5,192,000 for the Board of American Missions, which is organising new congregations in the US and Canada at the rate of more than one a week.

Elected as secretary Dr. George F. Harkins, 47, of Wyckoff, N.J., replacing Dr. F. Eppling Reinartz who will become president of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at Columbia, N.C. Dr. Harkins has been assistant to ULCA president Dr. Fry since 1949.

Heard an address by the Rt. Rev. Henry Knox Sherrill, former presiding bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church (US) and a World Council of Churches president, in which he described unity as "the great problem" still confronting the Christian church. He said "the present condition of hundreds of divided churches is contrary to the purpose of God revealed in Christ". EPS, Geneva

Religious Groups Hail Plan to Change Kerala School Law

(Trivandrum, Kerala) - An announcement in the Kerala Legislative Assembly that the controversial Education Act, enacted during the previous Communist administration, will be modified, has been hailed by religious groups here.

The law was passed in 1957 over the strong opposition of Roman Catholic, Protestant and (Hindu) Nair school authorities, who denounced it as an infringement on the freedom of private education and an attempt to regiment the country's private schools on a Communist basis.

The law required, among other things, that teachers be appointed from a panel approved by the Public Service Commission. This provision was later suspended following several outbursts of violence, picketing and other civil disobedience tactics by groups which included both students and teachers.

The Communist government which ruled from April 1957 until July 31, 1959, was later dismissed by the President of India on charges of lawlessness and misrule and the National Government took over. New Delhi's control ended after February 1 when general elections were held in which the three-party United Democratic Front, which had strongly opposed the Education Act, won 94 out of the 126 seats in the state assembly. (See EPS Nos. 1, 17, 20, 21, 26 and 29, 1959). EPS, Geneva

Puerto Rican Bishops Bar Vote for Munoz

(San Juan) - Three Roman Catholic bishops have issued a pastoral letter forbidding Catholics to vote for Governor Luis Munoz Marin's Popular Democratic party.

Mr. Munoz Marin is seeking re-election as chief executive of the island commonwealth in elections November 8.

In the letter published in the independent newspaper El Mundo, the bishops criticized the Governor's administration on three counts: its opposition to allowing public school children time off to attend religious instruction classes; a law permitting the teaching of birth control and allowing sterilization; and public tolerance of common-law marriages.

They said: "It is our obligation to prohibit Catholics from giving their votes to a party that accepts as its own the morality of the 'regime of liberty' negating Christian morals."

The signers were Archbishop James P. Davis of San Juan, Bishop James E. McManus of Ponce, and Bishop Luis Aponte Martinez, titular bishop of Lares.

Governor Munoz Marin has termed the letter an "incredible and unjust intervention in political liberties of Puerto Rican citizens". EPS, Geneva

Inter-Faith Team Will Make New Bible Translations

(New York) - A new joint translation of the Scriptures has been begun in New York by a team of Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish scholars.

The new translation will be published in 30 paperback volumes by a commercial firm, at intervals between 1962 and 1966.


Heading the translation team is Dr. William F. Albright, Methodist scholar and professor emeritus of Semitics at John Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md. His associates include the Rev. Mitchell J. Dahood, S.J., of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome; Dr. Moshe Greenberg and Dr. E.A. Speiser, both of the University of Pennsylvania; and Prof. Bo Reicke of the University of Basel, Switzerland. EPS, Geneva

New Statistics Emphasize Missionary Language Problem in Formosa

(Taipei, Formosa) - Only 59 of the 534 Protestant missionaries serving in Formosa (Taiwan) speak Taiwanese. The others, some of whom were formerly stationed on the Mainland, use Mandarin or speak through interpreters, according to a report by Far Eastern News Service.

The agency says the number of native-born Taiwanese on the island is between seven and eight million. Latest statistics based on a report by the Ministry of the Interior reveal the island's population includes a total of about one and a half million Chinese "Mainlanders" including 300,000 serving in the armed forces, instead of the "two to three million" figure usually quoted.

The Taiwan Christian Yearbook for 1960 reports that Formosa has 1,478 local churches and chapels administered by over 60 denominations. The largest of these is the Presbyterian Church with English, Canadian and American branches numbering 136,250 members and 116,517 "inquirers". Other church institutions include nine theological seminaries, 14 hospitals and clinics, one university, three colleges, six high schools and 50 kindergartens. EPS, Geneva



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Last Protestant Missionary Leaves Chinese Mainland

(Baltimore, Md.) - A Lutheran missionary who has spent 12 years in Communist China, five of them in prison, is returning to the United States. He is believed to be the last US Protestant missionary to leave the Mainland.

The Rev. Paul J. Mackensen, Jr., 35, is now on a freighter en route from Hong Kong to New York. He is expected to arrive in the United States in mid-November, according to reports received by his father, the Rev. Paul Mackensen, Sr., in Baltimore, Md.

Mr. Mackensen, Jr., served a five-year prison term for alleged espionage. After his release in March 1957, he announced his intention to remain in China. In September of that year he took a position as teacher of English at the Shanghai Institute of Foreign Languages.

The elder Mr. Mackensen said he did not know what his son's plans were when he returned to the US. The young missionary's decision to stay in China after his release from prison in 1957 had led to reports that he had been brainwashed. But his father told reporters that his son "decided to stay ... because he felt, once out, he could not get back in. He had learned to love the Chinese people and wanted to serve them."

Mr. Mackensen, Jr., first went to China in 1948. When the Communists took over in 1949 he elected to continue his ministry at Tsingtao. One year later when he requested permission to leave Red China his request was refused. He was arrested in 1952.

EPS, Geneva

Christian Ties Seen Binding Churches Across Political Lines

(Munster) - The ties which bind Christians in Eastern and Western Europe are stronger than the political differences which separate them, it has been emphasized by Dr. Ernst Wilm, president of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia.

"The Iron Curtain should not be regarded as a black-and-white demarcation line between Christianity and atheism", he told a recent meeting in Munster of Protestant religious teachers in Westphalian colleges. "The fact that Christians on both sides of the political frontier are reconciled within the Oikumene, gives us cause for gratitude to God."

He stressed the fact that Christians in Eastern Europe are not living in "silent churches or catacombs" and that the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church guide it "in obedience to God".

Referring to the recent Conference of European Churches at Nyborg, Denmark, Dr. Wilm, one of the conference leaders, said one should not underestimate the importance of the fact that at the meetings Christians from all over Europe not only convened at a time of serious political tension, but were able to talk to one another in a Christian spirit even on such international problems as disarmament and assistance to underdeveloped countries.

Such conversations, he said, give also a reason for hope that "this spirit of reconciliation may help to bring about political peace between the nations".

EPS, Geneva

Inter-Communion No "Panacea", Lutheran Leader Says

(Hannover) - A prominent German Lutheran church official has warned here that the churches ought not to regard inter-communion as "a panacea" or a way out of "an embarrassing situation".

Oberkirchenrat Erwin Wilkens of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, writing in his church's fortnightly journal said the churches must be concerned that they do not put pressure upon the individual conscience in this matter by coming to a hasty decision.

Referring specially to the Lausanne Youth Assembly held this summer, Pastor Wilkens said he did not object "in principle" to the fact that the youth had tackled "this most delicate question with youthful impatience.

But, he said, "their impatience and carefree attitude" must not be used by the churches as a point from which to launch "a programme of action which would take advantage of a favourable movement to force the issue (and thus) take away the Christian's freedom of decision".

"It is precisely in ecumenical co-operation that we must avoid taking decisions which represent only the outward or superficial and do not demonstrate a genuine ecumenical attitude", he wrote.

"Is separation at the communion table really worse than the division between the confessions?" the article asks. "Is it not possible that in the long run, by respecting the convictions and traditions of others we will arrive at a more fruitful ecumenical attitude? May it not be an ecumenical obligation to avoid any pressure upon conscience, and ... to exercise solidarity even while remaining divided, not to 'press forward' but instead to hold communion services at ecumenical conferences (when so sanctioned) in local churches."

If the issue is forced, he continued, the churches run the danger of "turning communion into an ethical issue". The basic problem in the ecumenical movement, he declared, is for the churches first to study more carefully the relationship between the unity of the Church in Christ and the visible manifestations of that unity.

The issue of inter-communion has been the subject of considerable debate among church leaders since youth at the Lausanne Assembly asked the churches to "work seriously for the establishment of an increasingly inclusive inter-communion" (see EPS No. 38).
EPS, Geneva

WCC Names New Youth Department Executive

(Geneva) - The Rev. Roderick S. French, 29, a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church (USA) has been appointed executive secretary of the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches. The appointment is effective immediately.

Mr. French succeeds the Rev. Philip Potter, who had held the position since December 1957. Mr. Potter has accepted a position as one of the general secretaries of the Methodist Missionary Society, which has headquarters in London. He will have special responsibility for the Society's work in West Africa and the West Indies.

Mr. French has served as associate secretary of the Department since September 1959. Previously he was for six years (1954-1959) chairman of the youth committee of the World Council of Churches and the World Council of Christian Education. In 1951-1952 he was chairman of the National Youth Commission of his church.

A native of Le Grande, Oregon, Mr. French was curate of the Church of the Ascension, New York, 1957-59. During that time he was a candidate for the Doctor of Theology degree at Union Theological Seminary, New York. He is a graduate of Kenyon College, Gambier, Ore., and received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass., in 1957.

From 1953 to 1955 he was chairman of the interdenominational United Christian Youth Movement. He was consultant to the North American Faith and Order Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, in 1957, and in 1958 attended the World Christian Education Convention in Tokyo. He is the author of "Don't Miss Your Calling" and a series of articles on "Church or Sect". He is married to the former Evelyn Fagg of North Platte, Nebraska.

EPS, Geneva

Burmese Prime Minister Pledges Religious Freedom

(Rangoon) - Burmese Prime Minister U Nu has told a meeting in Rangoon that adoption of Buddhism as the state religion will not affect the constitutional guarantees of freedom of conscience nor result in government discrimination against adherents of other religious faiths.

The Prime Minister said that "all citizens of our country can look forward with confidence to the future. The Buddhist religion in Burma has always shown tolerance and respect for other religions."

He spoke at a reception given by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a Roman Catholic organisation.

EPS, Geneva

Closer Co-operation Asked Between Protestants and Roman Catholics

(Edinburgh) - Sir Thomas Taylor, principal of Aberdeen University, has told the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, meeting here, that the Church of Scotland should, "without compromise of truth, draw closer to Roman Catholics in Christian charity, seeking whenever we may to find ways of co-operation with them in Christian service to our fellow-men".

Affirming that "this Kirk of Scotland is a church of the Reformation" and that there are "certain things (of the Roman Catholic Church) we deny ... in particular the mass and mariolatry ... because these things have no warrant in Scripture, because they are false in fact and because they are idolatrous both in principle and practice", Sir Thomas declared:

"But this being said,^{and} it must be said, let us recognize that Catholics like ourselves worship the same Lord and follow the same Christian way. Because of this we have far more in common with them than with all those who reject the Lordship of Christ whether they call themselves atheists, materialists, agnostics, scientific humanists or whatever it may be."

He advised the Assembly to "note with interest and sympathy the growing emphasis which the Roman church is placing on the study of the Bible, particularly in France".

"The Bible is an explosive book when it gets into men's hands and is taken seriously", he said. "Watch this new Roman Catholic interest in the Scriptures: it could be fraught with consequences of the greatest moment."

EPS, Geneva

French Catholic Hierarchy Condemns Desertion in Algerian War

(Paris) - The French Roman Catholic hierarchy has condemned desertion and subversive action as a solution to the moral perplexities resulting from the prolongation of the Algerian war.

At the same time, the Assembly of French Cardinals and Archbishops quoted the authority of Pope Pius XII for denouncing all acts contrary to natural morality, no matter what higher authority orders it, "even if failure (to commit the action) involves the most severe punishment".

The statement, which has been printed in full by most of the French newspapers, lists among these crimes acts of terrorism, outrages against the person, violence used to extract confessions, summary executions, and measures of reprisal that fall on the innocent.

It declares, "Even in the defense of legitimate rights or to support a cause one believes just, it is never permissible to use these methods which are intrinsically perverse and which certainly, by degrading consciences, continually delay the restoration of peace. It must be added that such acts compromise the exercise of responsible command and undermine legitimate authority in the minds of subordinates."

But, the Assembly said, "the confusion which reigns in the conscience of many people, especially young people", as the result of the situation in Algeria, will not be eased by their failure to obey the military authorities or by subversive actions. Recourse to these, it said, would involve "shirking the duties imposed by national solidarity and patriotism, sowing anarchy, and infringing the rights of the legitimate authorities to take decisions in case of doubt".

Christians, the hierarchy said, cannot remain aloof from international events in a situation which changes from hour to hour. They must, the bishops exhorted, "pray, get to know the Church's teachings on international affairs and act. They should pray for the peace of the world and better relations by liberation from the sins which are at the origin of wars ..."

Observers have commented that the statement will undoubtedly serve as an antidote to the disquiet produced by a petition issued last month by 121 French intellectuals urging in effect that French soldiers mutiny or desert rather than "take arms against the Algerians". It was also expected to be welcomed in government circles as support for President de Gaulle's policy for a cease-fire, following by a referendum to determine the future of Algeria.

No official Protestant statement has been made on the situation, but several Protestant leaders have issued individual statements. Professor Jacques Ellul of the University of Bordeaux, writing in Réforme, a publication of the French Reformed Church, says of the petition issued by the 121 intellectuals, "It is the spiritual and ethical breakdown which causes these intellectuals to take this attitude, which they mistake for an expression of conscience. I am sure that if these same intellectuals were living in a nation which was united and victorious ... they would be ardent in defending its actions."

Professor André Philip of the University of Paris has disagreed with him. "The problem of conscience does exist", he has written. "The question of disobeying the authorities does arise and will preoccupy young people increasingly. We must face it, instead of shirking it by trying to conjure it away."

Professor Paul Ricoeur of the Sorbonne, Paris, in an article in Christianisme Social, expresses sympathy for those who disobey because "we like them, regard this as an illegitimate war in which we are preventing the Algerian people from establishing an independent state like all other African peoples". However, he

said, "despite (this) fact, the state possesses a basis of legality, a constitutional form, the support of public opinion, (all of which) provide opportunities for legal action ... which have not yet been exhausted". (See EPS No. 16)

EPS, Geneva

Bishop of Guildford Dies at 63

(Brockenhurst, England) - The Bishop of Guildford, the Rt. Rev. Ivor Watkins, died suddenly Monday, October 24, at Brockenhurst, England, where he had gone for a brief convalescence after an illness. He was 63.

Long a leader in the ecumenical movement, Bishop Watkins was a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and was chairman of the Council for Ecumenical Co-operation of his church. In 1956 he headed a World Council delegation which visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox churches in Istanbul, to express the sympathy and offer aid on behalf of the churches following the political riots there.

Bishop Watkins was canon residentiary in Bristol Cathedral from 1934-1955. He was translated to the see of Guildford in 1956. He was educated at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and at Cuddesdon Theological College, and was ordained in 1924. He saw active service in the First World War.

EPS, Geneva

In Brief

British preacher Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead has preached his last sermon as pastor of London's City Temple, before a congregation of 3,000 persons. The 66-year old Methodist clergyman, often called the "best-known religious writer in the English-speaking world" is retiring from the pastorate after 23 years service.

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Seminaries to prepare Hindu Holy Men are under consideration in India. Recommendation before the Hindu Religious Endowments Commission include a suggestion to develop institutions patterned after Christian seminaries.

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The Assemblies of God, a US Pentecostal denomination, has announced it will broadcast a revival programme to Russia. The programme will broadcast twice a week in Russian and Ukrainian over five Far East stations and from KICY Nome, Alaska. A spokesman said that similar broadcasts during the past six years under private auspices have a listening audience estimated at more than six million persons.

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In Franeker, the Netherlands, Roman Catholics and Dutch Reformed will use the same church building. The old Roman Catholic church will be demolished and until the new one is completed, the Dutch Reformed have offered use of their building to the Roman Catholics.

EPS, Geneva

Correction

It was incorrectly stated in last week's issue (No. 39, October 21st) that the Archbishop of York, the Most Rev. A.M. Ramsey, was the representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Church of Scotland's observances marking the 400th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation. Dr. Ramsey spoke at the Anglican service held at St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh, on the previous Sunday.

A Special Report

Asian Churches Plan For Future

(Nasrapur) - A broad outline of guides for Asian churches in planning their strategy and programme has been blueprinted by a consultation convened last week in Nasrapur, near Bombay, India.

The guide was developed by some 40 representatives of churches in India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon who met to consider together whether the kind of Christian strategy inherited from their "missionary parents" is in fact the best one for contemporary work.

The meeting was arranged by the committees of Inter-Church Aid for Service and Mission, and Church and Society of the East Asia Christian Conference.

The major work of the conference was devoted to drawing up reports analysing "the present challenge to new forms of service and participation" in relation to three areas - the state, the rural community and the urban community.

The report on the "state" acknowledges increasing channeling of large state resources into many fields in which voluntary agencies had concentrated their efforts, particularly education, medicine and community development. As a result it says "in all countries voluntary agencies have ... come under stricter government control and many aspects of Christian institutions such as the right to teach the Bible, and appoint staff, which were considered basic to the nature and value of the institutions are being denied or threatened".

At the same time, it says many church institutions set up to meet a specific need have not been flexible enough to keep pace with changing circumstances. It declares:

"The churches in our countries have held themselves too much aloof from politics and have not bothered to counteract the ignorance about, and the misunderstanding of, the nature and purpose of political action. They have failed to maintain adequate contact with those of their members who went into politics, government service or business.

"The first need", it continues, "is that the churches should intensify this pastoral care for their members ... but they must go beyond this and recognize in word and action the Lordship of Christ over all life and think and speak out for the good of the society as a whole. The Church can no longer think of service as something entirely divorced from state activity."

The consultation recommended an action programme for the churches including: 1. "a revolution of existing church institutions"; 2. pioneer work in the fields inadequately served by the government; 3. opening of hostels for school children attending government schools; and 4. the establishment of institutes to help Christian laymen understand their Christian ministry in politics and business administration.

The statement on the churches in rural communities observes that "while our national governments have not reached their policies of community development on consciously Christian grounds, it still remains true that their aims ... should be interpreted as God's hand in our recent history".

It noted that churches face three specific problems in their work in rural areas: "the serious lack of trained men and women who are both well-grounded in the faith and technically competent"; the fact that church service has traditionally been "more communicably centred than community centred. We have no grounds ... for a service which ends in service to one's own religious group", it said; and the problem of "haphazard" and poorly planned church programmes.

As a start in meeting some of these problems, the consultation recommended that courses be undertaken immediately to train leaders who could establish rural co-operatives on "a large scale" in each of the four countries represented.

The discussion on work in urban areas also resulted in a series of recommendations.

These included: the establishment of housing co-operatives and of day hostels for labourers and students; the training of Christian social workers; the establishment of marriage guidance and family planning centres; and programmes to assist Christians "to participate fully" in trade unions and similar organisations.

In all new programmes undertaken by the churches, the consultation emphasized, "the primary emphasis ... must not be on the maintenance of however excellent Christian institutions, but on full participation in total community programmes.

"However difficult it may be", it stated, "the churches must not view the government actions in taking over schools, for example, as a crippling blow to the Christian enterprise, but as an invitation to participate in a wider field and to find new forms in which to make a specifically Christian witness."

EPS, Geneva

